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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1284  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0941  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1982  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USTRANSCOM SCOTT AFB IL PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEFAAA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY 1468  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY 1356  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2784  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2469

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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: THE BOLASHAK REVOLUTION

Classified By: Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland: 1.4 (B), (D)

1. (SBU) At a September 8 dinner in honor of the UK Minister for Europe, Baroness Glenyth Kinnock of Holyhead, the Ambassador was seated next to the deputy head of Prime Minister Masimov's office, Dauren Toleukhanov. Before moving to the Prime Minister's apparat, Toleukhanov was a diplomat, having spent much of his career, including a six-year stint at the Embassy of Kazakhstan in London, working on European and U.S. affairs. Earlier, he spent a year in St. Louis, Missouri, as an exchange student, and later completed his graduate studies at Cambridge University in England, where he was a Bolashak grantee.

2. (SBU) Soon after independence, President Nazarbayev created the Bolashak program that provides full university education to over one thousand Kazakhstani students a year because he foresaw it would be necessary to educate a new generation of leaders with new mentalities, if the country were to grow and prosper away from its traditional Soviet model. The so-called Bolashak Generation is apparent now throughout the public and private sectors -- bright, globalized, young people, almost all speaking English, who are in positions just a level or two away from decision-making authority.

3. (C) Toleukhanov mentioned he is serving as a character witness for another Bolashak alumnus, former Deputy Minister of Ecology Babayev, who was caught up in the wave of corruption-scandal arrests in recent months. Toleukhanov asserted that Babayev is "absolutely innocent." When the Ambassador asked if Toleukhanov has any qualms about serving as a character witness for his friend, given his own sensitive, high position, Toleukhanov replied, "Certainly not. It's the right thing to do." Replying to the Ambassador's question why Babayev was arrested in the first place, Toleukhanov answered that he'd gotten caught in the cross-fire of the old guard trying to hang on in the face of the rising younger generation. He said, "You need to understand that Kazakhstan is already experiencing a revolution. So far, it's a slow-motion revolution. It's the Bolashak Revolution."

